

Document Title: **Absence Management Policy**

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REVISIONS & APPROVALS

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Regular attendance is crucial for maintaining productivity and smooth operations at Rockwell. This policy outlines the roles of employees, managers, and HR in managing attendance effectively, while ensuring fair and consistent treatment of all staff.

This policy is designed to:

- Ensure fair and consistent management of employee attendance.
- Promote employee wellbeing and maintain productivity across the Company..
- Provide clear guidance on handling frequent or long-term absences.
- Define the responsibilities of employees, managers and HR in upholding effective attendance practices.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support employees who are unable to attend work due to genuine reasons, while effectively managing absenteeism across the Company. We aim to provide a compassionate and understanding approach, helping employees return to work as smoothly as possible by offering the necessary supports and accommodations.

Rockwell is committed to treating all employees fairly and consistently in line with relevant legislation, in particular the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, and the Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Act 2005. We ensure that any absence-related actions respect individual circumstances and comply with legislative requirements.

HR: Monitors absenteeism trends and provides guidance to managers to uphold a fair and supportive approach.

Managers: Oversee absenteeism within their teams, addressing any issues promptly and with sensitivity.

3.0 Reporting Absences

Employees are encouraged to inform their Line Manager of any absence as soon as possible, and no later than one hour before their usual start time. If the Line Manager is unavailable, employees should reach out to HR directly. Please note that texts, emails, or indirect contact methods are not acceptable.

In addition, all Line Managers must notify HR of any employee absence within two hours of being informed by the employee, to ensure all absences are accurately recorded. This ensures consistent and comprehensive tracking of absenteeism across the Company.

In making contact regarding an absence from work, you will be asked to provide the following information:

- A brief description of the illness.
- The expected date of return.
- How you can be contacted, if necessary.

A medical certificate must be submitted to HR for absences greater than two days of absence i.e. on the third day, inclusive of weekends, and weekly thereafter for the duration of the absence. A medical certificate will be required for each individual absence, regardless of its duration, if an employee is absent on 6 or more occurrences in any one rolling 12-month period. A Medical Certificate is required for any absence immediately prior to or after Annual Leave or a Public Holiday. The Company reserves the right to refer any employee to their own nominated doctor for a second opinion. In order to comply

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with insurance regulations, certain absences will require a final certificate stating that an employee is fit to resume their normal duties. The Company retains the right to have an employee assessed by their own nominated doctor to ensure s/he is fit to return to their role. Failure to provide medical certificates, where required, will be regarded as unauthorised absences and dealt with as outlined below.

4.0 Unauthorised Absence

Any absence not reported in accordance with the above procedure will be considered unauthorised, unless a reason deemed acceptable by the Company is provided later.

If an employee does not report for work and has not informed their immediate Line Manager or HR as to why they have not attended, their Line Manager should make all reasonable efforts to contact them. If the Line Manager cannot contact the employee, they will then notify HR who will attempt to contact the absent employee. If HR still cannot contact the absent employee, they will attempt to contact the employee's next of kin to ensure the safety, health and welfare of the employee.

If the reason why the employee has not made contact is unacceptable, the disciplinary procedure will be followed. For more information, please refer to the HR Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

5.0 Short-Term & Sporadic Absences

Employee absences should be closely monitored, and formal action may be warranted when any of the following trigger points are reached:

- More than 10 days of absence within a rolling 12-month period.
- More than 3 instances of absence in a rolling 3-month period.
- More than 6 instances of absence in a rolling 12-month period.

Upon reaching any of these thresholds, the Line Manager should promptly investigate the situation in consultation with HR, allowing the employee to explain their absences.

Guidelines for Management:

- Line Managers should proactively address attendance issues as they arise, rather than waiting for absence thresholds to be met.
- While a return-to-work meeting may not be feasible for every absence, managers should have an informal discussion with the employee upon their return to understand any patterns or concerns.
- A formal return-to-work meeting is required when an employee reaches a trigger point (10 days or more of absence in 12 months, more than 3 instances in 3 months, or more than 6 instances in 12 months). This meeting should document the reasons for absences and discuss necessary support. (Please use the attached Return to Work Form.)
- All absences and discussions must be accurately documented and submitted to HR for inclusion in the employee's personnel file to ensure consistency and fairness.

If an employee's absences are frequent or exceed the aforementioned thresholds, further evaluation and discussions regarding their attendance patterns may be required.

5.1 Returning to Work Following Short-Term Absence

During the return-to-work meeting, Line Managers should consider the following:

- Patterns of absence (e.g., specific days).
- Whether absences are sporadic or consistent.
- The medical certification status of absences.

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- Reasons for previous absences and any potential underlying causes.
- The employee's length of service and health history.

If there are doubts about the legitimacy of an absence, please consult HR. Continued short-term absences may lead to a referral to the Company's Medical Doctor.

If absence patterns remain unacceptable, employees will be informed during follow-up discussions. An Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP) may be implemented to provide structured support and set clear expectations for improving attendance. Progress will be monitored during the agreed review period, and if attendance improves, further disciplinary action may be avoided.

However, if absences continue to exceed agreed limits during this period, disciplinary procedures will be initiated. This may include steps such as a Verbal Warning, First Written Warning, Final Written Warning, and potentially Dismissal. In some cases, more serious action, including dismissal, may be warranted earlier. However, these steps are usually progressive in nature, allowing employees to understand the seriousness of the situation and offering them the opportunity to improve their performance or behaviour before facing more severe consequences.

Factors considered in such cases include the impact on business operations, effects on colleagues, future absence risks, and the level of communication and support provided during the absence.

If evidence suggests potential abuse of sick leave (e.g., patterns of absence or excessive occurrences), the matter will be addressed in accordance with disciplinary procedures. Excessive absenteeism is defined as 10 or more days of absence within a rolling 12-month period, more than 3 instances in a rolling 3 months, or more than 6 instances in a rolling 12 months. Such circumstances may lead to disciplinary action to ensure accountability and maintain workplace standards.

For more information on the Company's disciplinary process, please refer to the HR Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

6.0 Long-Term Absences

Long-term absence is defined as any absence exceeding two consecutive weeks, or where the expected return date is unknown. Employees must submit a weekly medical certificate to HR. The Company is committed to supporting employees in their return to work as soon as possible through a fair and transparent process.

The following process applies to long-term absence:

- Employees must notify HR when they are medically fit to return.
- A medical certificate must confirm the employee's fitness to return to full duties or outline any suggested restrictions.
- HR will coordinate with the employee's Line Manager and the employee to confirm the return-to-work date.
- If there are doubts about the employee's fitness to return, advice from the Company's Medical Doctor will be sought.

6.1 Returning to Work Following Long-Term Absence

Upon return from long-term absence, the Line Manager should hold a return-to-work meeting on the employee's first day back. The meeting should:

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- Assess the employee's fitness to resume normal duties.
- Ensure completion of all necessary documentation.
- Address any concerns the employee may have regarding their return.
- Update the employee on significant developments that occurred during their absence.

During the meeting, the Line Manager should facilitate a discussion to review the absence and ensure a smooth transition back to work for the employee. It should be assumed that the absence was for legitimate medical reasons unless evidence suggests otherwise. The employee will be invited to discuss the reasons for their absence.

Consider the following during the discussion:

- Review the medical certificate confirming the employee's fitness to return.
- Provide an opportunity for the employee to express any concerns and discuss any necessary supports required.
- Invite the employee to share thoughts on potential future absences and ways to reduce them.
- Assess any discernible patterns contributing to the long-term absence.
- Evaluate the employee's current health status in relation to their job duties.
- Identify any reasonable adjustments or support measures to assist reintegration.
- Reflect on the communication and support provided during the absence.

If there is uncertainty regarding an employee's return to work after a long-term absence, the Line Manager and HR will consult together. A thorough discussion should clarify any medical, personal, or occupational factors contributing to the uncertainty.

If a reasonable return-to-work date is not established by the employee after consulting with their Line Manager or HR, the disciplinary process may be initiated. This should be approached with care, ensuring the employee is informed about the implications and given the chance to share their perspective. Clear communication is essential throughout this process to support the employee while adhering to company policies.

For more details on the disciplinary process and addressing absences, please refer to sections 5.0 and 5.1 of this document, along with the HR Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

7.0 Annual Leave Entitlements

If an employee falls ill while on annual leave, they may have that time counted as sick leave, provided they can submit a valid medical certificate. Please note that post-dated certificates (those covering a period before the actual appointment) will not be accepted. This requirement ensures that sick leave is supported by a medical professional's assessment of the employee's health at the time of their illness.

While on annual leave and/or certified sick leave, employees continue to accrue their annual leave as usual, allowing them to maintain their entitlements during their time away from work.

For those on long-term sick leave who are unable to take their annual leave due to illness, they are permitted to carry over any unused leave for up to 15 months after the year it was earned.

If an employee leaves the Company within that 15-month timeframe, they will receive payment for any unused annual leave that they could not take due to illness. This policy is designed to support employees' wellbeing and ensure they receive the benefits they have earned.

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8.0 Sick Pay

For more information about sick pay entitlements, employees are encouraged to contact HR for assistance.

9.0 Routine Medical Appointments (Doctor, Dentist, Hospital)

Employees are encouraged to schedule routine medical appointments outside of their regular working hours whenever feasible. However, should it be necessary to attend an appointment during working hours, the Company will endeavour to accommodate such requests with flexibility. In these instances, employees are required to consult with their Line Manager to discuss arrangements for making up the time taken for their appointments. Line Managers may request to see an appointment card for verification purposes. If an appointment results in the employee being absent from work for a full working day or longer, this absence should be recorded as sick leave.

10.0 Conclusion

This Absence Management Policy aims to demonstrate Rockwell's commitment to supporting our employees while also maintaining a productive workplace. We have clear guidelines for reporting absences, managing both short-term and long-term leave due to illness, as well as accommodating medical appointments.

If you have any questions about this policy, please reach out to your Line Manager or the HR Department.

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Return to Work Questionnaire

For further details on both the steps for reporting an absence and the procedures for returning to work following an absence, please refer to the company's Absence Management Policy.

The Return to Work Questionnaire is to be completed on the first day back to work.

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS (BLOCK LETTERS)

Employee First Name:	<input type="text"/>	Employee Surname:	<input type="text"/>
Line Manager:	<input type="text"/>	Site Location:	<input type="text"/>
Job Title:	<input type="text"/>	Department:	<input type="text"/>

SECTION B: ABSENCE DETAILS

Date of Return to Work:	<input type="text"/>	Date Absent From:	<input type="text"/>
Date of Return to Work Meeting:	<input type="text"/>	Date Absent To:	<input type="text"/>
Did this Absence Last 3 or More Days:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Was this Absence as a Result of Illness:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
For Absences of 3 Days or More due to Illness, was the Required Medical Certificate Provided?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

Reason for Absence:

Was the Absence Work-Related:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
If Yes, was the Absence Reported to the Health & Safety Authority (HSA):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Discussed and Agreed Supportive Measures:

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Has the Employee Reached a Trigger Point (10 or more days of absence within a rolling 12-month period, more than 3 instances in a rolling 3-month period, or more than 6 instances in a rolling 12-month period):

Yes

No

Summary of Any Other Outcomes of the Discussion:

Any Other Relevant Information? (e.g Recommendations from Medical Professional)

SECTION C: SIGNATURE & AGREEMENT

Employee Signature:

Date:

Line Manager Signature:

Date:

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